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Host Community Impacts: Learning From the Experience of Hosting International Volunteers in El Barrial, Suchitoto, Getsemani and San Miguel, El Salvador

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by

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Abstract

Previous exploration of International Experiential Learning (IEL) programs has generally focused on the experience of Northern volunteers, without considering the outcomes in Southern host communities. Contemporary scholars raise serious concerns about potential harm being done in Southern host communities as a result of IEL programs that resemble historical colonialism. This study contributes to the growing body of research that addresses this gap in the understanding of Southern host community experiences. The results tell us that the host community members do not articulate negative experiences in the way that post-colonial scholars predict. The analysis of 23 interviews including host community members, NGO staff and community leaders suggests program changes that could improve learning outcomes, and challenge North-South structural inequality.

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Introduction

An international experience can have a profound impact on a person's understanding of the world and their place in it. Many people (including myself, more on my positionality later) can point to a formative experience of immersion in a different culture, processes of adaptation and resilience-building that among many other things, impact their academic and professional trajectory. There exists, however, some concern about the quality and character of these international experiential learning forays, more specifically about potential unintended negative consequences of this longstanding practice for the communities that host them. Indeed we can describe a number of ties to patterns of relationships associated with historical colonialism in today's practice.

Samantha Nutt describes people from the Global North[1] spending their holidays volunteering in the Global South as a plague of 'misspent altruism' and alleges that travelling to poor nations to help only helps the traveler. To illustrate this point Dr. Nutt, a well-known Canadian humanitarian activist, describes the way that 'do-gooders' who held no skills or experience in disaster response poured into Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. These volunteers likely did not help, or worse, perhaps harmed the recovery effort. Dr. Nutt recommends that people concerned with global injustice should instead donate on an ongoing basis to an organization that they trust (Relief efforts need better focus, 2012).

This Major Research Project (MRP) explores IEL programs facilitated by Habitat for Humanity El Salvador (HFHES), in El Salvador, in partnership with a Canadian

[1] The terms 'Global North' and 'Global South' or alternatively 'Northern' and 'Southern' are used in this paper to refer to people who live in more industrialized, wealthy parts of he world (North) and people who live in less industrialized, poorer parts of the world (South). These terms can also be understood as referring to colonized (South) and colonizer (North) people.

university in order to better understand how host community members experience the engagement with foreign volunteers. My goal is to gain insight into this poorly understood aspect of IEL programs in order to improve program outcomes in the future.

The Problem with IEL

There is a large and growing body of literature, by Canadian and other Northern scholars that suggests that North-South international experiential learning (IEL) programs are indeed problematic (Dean, 2001; Feagan & Boylan, 2016; Matthews & Sidhu, 2005; Oldfield, 2008; Tiessen, 2012). The concerns align with a post-colonial framing of issues including perpetuating colonial power relationships, reinforcing ethnocentric attitudes in participants, and causing harm in Southern communities.

Crabtree (2013) suggests that as a result of participation in an IEL program Southern host communities might experience a breakdown of community relations, increased conflict, or a feeling of disaffection with their home. In light of such critique, one might judge that this type of travel to learn and volunteer is at best unproductive and at worst causing harm, and should cease. And yet IEL programs have increased in number and scale dramatically over the past 10 years (Larsen, 2016). A post-colonial analysis can provide useful insights to help us understand what may be going on underneath the "helping imperative" (Heron, 2007). At the same time, we will find that its own narrative of victimization through neo-colonial relations is not necessarily representative of what host communities actually experience.

The recent critical scholarship can be contrasted with a highly uncritical dominant discourse in Canadian media and society, supported by a myriad of unregulated profit and non-profit entities that cater to this market by facilitating IEL programs. There is

evidence that this uncritical dominant perspective has been taken up in the Canadian secondary school system (Fizzell & Epprecht, 2014), where it may be reinforcing ideas of Western cultural superiority through a discourse of 'global citizenship' (Cameron, 2014).

Not all of the public discourse around IEL programs is uncritical. In fact there have been high profile critiques and exposés in the media (example: CBC – volunteers unleashed, 2015) and in popular culture (example: Humanitarians of Tinder). Meanwhile, within the academy, it has become a standard position for any scholarly work on the topic of IEL programs to include a critical discussion of the potential negative impacts of these programs (Dean, 2001; Feagan & Boylan, 2016; Matthews & Sidhu, 2005; Oldfield, 2008; Tiessen 2012).

At the root of the critical media and academic discussion of IEL programs is the implication that this largely unidirectional flow of volunteers from Northern to Southern countries (Coghlan & Fennell, 2009) mirrors centuries-old patterns of exploitation in some form – something that will be examined shortly. This perspective is supported by a post-colonial social constructivist analysis that links IEL programs to the reproduction of colonial relations. This analysis asserts that colonial processes of dominance and extraction continue today in both old and new forms, and that IEL programs could represent a colonial continuity of the centre penetrating and dominating the periphery, maintaining centuries old global power relations (Pluim et al. 2012). When IEL programs are seen as potentially perpetuating this coloniality, it would follow that the Southern communities receiving volunteers may be impacted in contemporary ways that mirror these older patterns - a continuity of exploitation.

It is a serious problem that there may be harm inflicted as a result of IEL programs in Southern communities and that they are not attending to quelling some of these concerns. Many individuals in academia and civil society suggest that these programs could detrimentally affect Southern host community members. I too share this concern. There are concrete examples of negative outcomes related to IEL programs (Richter & Norman, 2010), and specific questions raised in response. Are these isolated examples or are they evidence of a pattern of exploitation? Is there evidence to support this claim? Interestingly, many researchers have noted that there is generally insufficient information on the experience of Southern community members (Crabtree, 2008; Grusky, 2000; Oldfield, 2008; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2015) to verify some of these claims, so it is possible that these concerns are unfounded, or that the reality of harm and benefit related to IEL programs is much more nuanced. This gap in understanding is the central focus of my research.

This Major Research Project explores the central research question: Are host communities experiencing harm as a result of their participation in IEL-oriented programs? And from there asks: What lessons could be learned from their experiences that could positively impact the design and implementation of future IEL programs? I will analyze the narratives that emerge from the data collection with host communities as evidence that supports or challenges the assertion that they are being harmed.

I draw on a postcolonial lens for this research based on links between the legacy of historical colonialism and the current practices associated with IEL programs. The critiques of IEL programs generally put forward by contemporary scholars are most often postcolonial in nature. For example Heron (2016) describes the connection between

colonialism and IEL programs as a genealogical relationship between the 'civilizing mission of colonization' and the concerns noted earlier associated with the helping imperative and the contemporary Northern volunteer. This positioning of IEL as a colonial legacy, part of a broader *colonial continuity*, implies an imposition of Northern values and practices upon the Southern community. It also implies the subjugation of the Southern community regarding the conscious or even perhaps subconscious goals/values of Northern individuals and institutions. That colonialism has had fundamentally negative impacts, which contemporary economic and social processes continue to perpetuate, is a fundamental assumption of this research project.

Employing a postcolonial analysis I also need to problematize the involvement of a Northern scholar (myself) in research with Southern community members. That is, as acknowledgement of my being embedded in a colonial discourse that continues to exacerbate unequal power relationships between countries – consciously or unconsciously. This suggests that I align this work to uncover new knowledge **with** the community members, and not for them. It is important that this research not attempt to speak for the community members, or coopt their views (Kapoor, 2004). To this end I will be cognizant of my bias as a Northern scholar and reflect on how this bias may be present in the collection and analysis of data. This is where I highlight the critical role of my Salvadoran research colleagues in collecting and making sense of the data, and providing feedback on the validity of the findings of this study.

Personal Connections and Experience

This research is influenced by my close and lengthy relationship with this specific type of North-South engagement, and I acknowledge that I am invested in this type of

learning for students and communities. This study is a form of professional introspection and stems from a sense of responsibility for the outcomes of programs I deliver. One part of my current professional role involves organizing and promoting IEL programs for post-secondary students. I have also had extensive experience planning and facilitating IEL programs in both the Global North and South. From volunteering with a reforestation program alongside the Tanzanian government, to supporting addiction and HIV harm reduction programs with an NGO in New Delhi, I have witnessed first-hand the interactions between both foreign (and local) volunteers, and community members.

In addition to the many examples of truly profound and life changing learning and growth moments I have witnessed volunteers undergo during IEL programs, in the coming analysis I reflect on the sometimes uncomfortable and awkward moments of foreigners interacting with community members. For example, in my professional career I have seen volunteers turning down the offer of a shared meal or reacting with disgust to a local washroom that did not have a western style toilet. I have observed volunteers ignoring host community members and speaking only in English, and often, subscribing to an intimacy narrative (Conran, 2011) that exaggerates the relationship significance of a very short, superficial engagement. I am aware of volunteers taking and sharing inappropriate photos or throwing handfuls of candy to unknown children on the street, and of volunteers oversimplifying complex community development problems, overestimating their understanding of community dynamics and exaggerating the impact of their 'help'. There are many of these instances that have spoken to me of the necessity for deepening our understanding of the limits of such global engagement, and considering

the kinds of harm that such interactions potentially entail, of the potential for shifting the interactions in ways that address these kinds of issues.

It has often struck me that the community members in these situations have not necessarily chosen to interact with the foreigner(s), and I have wondered about how they might describe the experience in their own words. Rarely have I been able to ask this kind of question, and I was left wondering if the experience and learning of the volunteer was at the expense of the local community member. This research indulges my curiosity as to the degree local people are aware, affected, or even care about the impact of IEL programs and the colonial structures behind it. The following section investigates recent literature that explores impacts of IEL programs Southern host communities.

Literature Review

The structure and outcomes of IEL programs are highly variable and based on factors such as the duration of the program, the degree of close cultural contact, the particular circumstances of the host country and community, the roles and objectives of the institutions and/or partners that have created the engagement opportunity, and the predispositions and motivations of the individual travelers (Crabtree, 2008; Pegg et al., 2012; Tiessen, 2012). This diversity is also reflected in the scholarship that examines the field of IEL, as important works can be found in a variety of disciplines including education, tourism, international development, anthropology, global health and sociology. With this in mind, I am focusing my literature review on recent (within the last 20 years) work, and emphasizing studies that specifically looked at the issue of host community impacts, as well as scholarship that raises post-colonial critiques of unidirectional North-South volunteer programs. These critical perspectives in the

literature provide a means to understand and deconstruct the relationship between IEL volunteers and the host community members with whom they interact.

Similar to other scholars (Grusky, 2000; Crabtree, 2008; Oldfield, 2008; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2015) I found relatively little published research focused on impacts of IEL programs in host communities. There seems to be a dearth of such research examining the views and perceptions of the Southern host community members, likely related to issues of language barriers, lack of long term relationships and research funding priorities. The focus has been primarily on the impacts on Northern volunteers and on the views of organizational staff in Southern organizations that facilitate IEL programs. Crabtree (2013) postulates that it is the "number of potentially consequential contextual variables", (p. 60) that is, the vast differences between programs described earlier, that make researching host community impacts such a challenge. Also, responding to a research question framed around potential unintended consequences is much more difficult than assessing planned program outcomes.

Fortunately, several studies have been published over the past few years that explore the Southern community narrative of an IEL experience in order to better understand the effects of these programs on the communities where they took place. After addressing the terminology used to describe IEL, I will discuss the findings of this recent host community narrative research, followed by an exploration of the post-colonial critiques that scholars raise about these programs.

A Brief Word on Terminology

The terms used to refer to IEL programs are a point of considerable confusion in the scholarship, as many authors have coined new terms based on a particular rationale or

political stance. As a result the terminology has evolved dramatically from what was once considered simply to be a ‘mission trip’. It is useful to consider where the practice began. The IEL options available today are the result of over a century of iterating on learning that occurs outside of the classroom, the roots of which are often traced to John Dewey (1938) and later David Kolb (1934). These scholars articulated experiential learning models that are based on doing something, followed by observation, reflection and analysis (MacDonald & Tiessen, 2018). In recent decades middle-class people from the Global North have participated in short-term trips to the Global South, often organized by churches, which introduced a ‘helping’ motivation in the form of missions programs. Distancing the practice from its Christian roots led to the secularization of the terminology (Benham Rennick, 2013), alignment with the field of international development through ‘participatory development’ programs (Crabtree, 2008), and the birth of new terms such as ‘voluntourism’ (Conran, 2011; Tiessen, 2012). Harman et al. (2014) describes the contemporary effort to differentiate IEL programs from other forms of travel such as tourism. In particular, the term voluntourism has become a ‘dirty word’ in a field that increasingly emphasizes environmental and social justice outcomes (Larkin, 2016).

In reality, traditional international tourist experiences and voluntourism can be hard to distinguish from one another. Indeed the addition of some type of charitable element (for example a half-day volunteering) to an otherwise leisure-filled trip is enough to create this distinction (Tiessen, 2012). So the terminology most often employed today (e.g. Backpacktivism, Travel with Purpose, Solidarity Exchange, Global Service Learning, International/Transnational Service Learning, International Experiential Learning) seems

to actively disassociate itself from traditional volunteer tourism (Macdonald & Tiessen, 2018). Perhaps this is due to a concern that the term voluntourism belies the true nature of these programs: tourism that is focused on the experience and goals of the volunteer, without serious intent to benefit host communities or to verify that programs are benefitting host communities.

There is no single term that seems to accurately describe these programs. For this study I have opted to use the term International Experiential Learning (IEL) as this focuses on the possibility of learning in these programs, in a way that more closely resembles the roots articulated by Dewey and Kolb. Also, IEL does not imply an alignment with international development processes. Certainly many IEL programs do connect volunteer activities to a process of community development (Conran, 2011), however this is not always the case. IEL programs that place participants in, for example, a school or human rights NGO may argue that the volunteer receives more concrete benefit as a learner, than they are contributing to any community development outcome. Further, when taken up by an institution of learning, as a credit bearing course, IEL represents a distinct subset of global interactions, given that it is meant to have a clear and intentional learning component that is coupled with a set of experiences meant to complement one another. However my use of IEL in this study is generally connected to programs that include a host community in the Global South, which is a common element across many of the different types of volunteer and learning programs I have introduced here.

Where's the Host Community Perspective? A Tale of Three Studies.

The impacts on host communities that are a consequence of IEL programs in the

Global South are not well understood. Recent scholarship strives to fill this gap, and I will share several examples here. O'Sullivan and Smaller (2016) conducted a pilot study with two Nicaraguan host communities that had experience hosting high school and/or college groups for short duration stays (1-2 weeks). The main finding of this study was that the "residents of the participating villages were unanimous in their opinion that the programs were very positive, that they benefited the community and everyone involved, and that they should be continued" p.51. The host community members pointed to a number of concrete benefits including intercultural learning on behalf of the foreign volunteers and the community members, as well as material benefits in the community through donations of resources and labour. Host community members in this study offered very few concerns about the program. Concerns that arose related mainly to planning logistics, such as the timing of host family payments, and timing of the placements themselves.

O'Sullivan and Smaller (2016) included Nicaraguan Program Coordinators in their research, whose views provided a more critical view of the IEL experience. For example the Program Coordinators expressed concern that the focus on "building things" (p. 57) is contributing to a charity model that is reinforcing the problematic idea of wealthy Northerners who come to 'help'. Despite this the program coordinators in the Nicaraguan study were positive about the IEL programs and advocate for them to continue. They suggest less time spent on building or "helping the poor" (p. 57) and more time engaged in deeper learning activities. It is worth noting that in the O'Sullivan and Smaller study, a trained Nicaraguan sociologist, who was very familiar with rural Nicaraguan life, conducted the host community interviews.

In another case study in northern Thailand, Conran (2011) looked at IEL programs from a rather different perspective, which compares the narrative of Northern volunteers with that of the host community members and program coordinators. In particular, the author explores how intimacy emerges as a significant theme in the volunteer descriptions of their experiences, and argues that though it has some merit, this focus on intimacy obscures the structural inequality that underlies the encounter. Intimacy in this case is being used to describe a sentiment of friendship, and "an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about oneself and others" (p. 1455) that seems unlikely given the short timeframe, the cultural gap and lack of shared language between volunteers and host community members.

Interestingly the Conran study found that the Thai host community members echoed many of the same sentiments of intimacy as the volunteers, and overall expressed a very positive outcome from their experience. The author suggests that while this IEL program may exhibit post-colonial characteristics, it can also have very positive outcomes for its participants. In a salient conclusion the researcher points out that if IEL programs are to achieve broader goals of challenging global structural inequality, the focus on the intimate must be broadened to address the policies that reinforce the status quo, in which IEL programs function (Conran, 2011). So, though there are critiques at the structural level, it would appear that the host-communities expressed benefits from their participation.

It is more common for researchers investigating host community impacts to interview in-country program coordinators than members of the wider community. A good example of this is a study that interviewed staff at 70 Southern NGOs across seven

countries conducted by Barbara Heron between 2007 and 2012 (Heron, 2016). As in the two case studies mentioned previously, this research found that the sentiment was generally positive regarding the foreign volunteers, and that there is support for international volunteering to continue in this capacity. It is important to note that the Southern NGO staff members in this study are aware of the particular challenges that come with supporting young Northerners in this type of learning endeavor and issues around actual community impacts. For example, there was agreement among many of the staff members that volunteers on the 3-6 month long programs are sometimes only getting past the adjustment phase of their experience at the conclusion of their programs. This implies that the NGO staff members would prefer for the volunteers to stay longer in order to meet host community needs, as well that they see the volunteers as the primary beneficiaries of these programs.

Heron's analysis of the narratives supplied by the program coordinators in this study suggests that while a post-colonial framework may make sense from the perspective of a critical Northern scholar, it may not appear fully congruent with the experiences of Southern hosts. The perspective of the NGO staff members could not be adequately understood through a post-colonial lens alone. Heron adds that while it is the responsibility of all of us in the North to carefully consider post-colonial consequences of Northern engagement in the south, and the possible detriment that may result from these programs, it is equally our responsibility not to assume that this lens is shared by people in the Global South.

These examples of recent case studies indicate that host community members are generally satisfied with their experiences as participants in an IEL program. The

individuals involved are generally engaged in forging respectful and positive relationships. There is a sign of some dissatisfaction about the lack of willingness to challenge structural inequalities, more often expressed by NGO staff members and program coordinators. These examples of recent host community impact studies have similar aims in terms of better understanding Southern host community perspectives on international volunteers, and a common result of a generally positive impression of the experience. A major difference between the studies, which also starts to elucidate the gap in host community impact research, is the differences among the IEL program offerings themselves. If we look at three significant factors: age of the volunteers, duration of the IEL program, and the type of volunteer activity undertaken, we can see that these examples include a number of very different variables.

The IEL program in Nicaragua involved high school students who spend 5-7 days staying in local residents' homes in a rural village, assisting in a community-led service project. The Thai example is based on Northern volunteers participating in a wide variety of activities and durations with 3 different Thai NGOs, from volunteering at a women's shelter to nature trail construction. The age of the foreign volunteers and duration of their IEL programs also vary widely in this case. Finally, the Heron study, which involved 70 NGOs in 7 countries, is focused on 'short' volunteer programs that are aligned with international development post-secondary programs. Volunteers could be assumed to be university-aged, and short in this context is considered 3-6 months duration which is actually rather long, when compared with the other studies.

The Helping Imperative

Unidirectional North-South IEL programs being offered by educational institutions can be seen as extending the Northern classroom learning space into communities in the Global South. Just as students are the intended beneficiaries of learning in their classroom, the students/participants are generally the primary beneficiary of some versions of IEL programs that focus largely on their learning, personal development and cultivation of career capital (Tiessen, 2014). It has been well documented that student learners benefit from experiential learning while immersed in a new cultural context, often using the mechanism of volunteering (Coughlan & Fennell, 2009; Difruscio et al., 2013; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2015; Pluim et al., 2012; Tiessen, 2012;).

Considering the concern that benefits of IEL may be largely focused on the Northern volunteer, this starts to mirror an exploitative, colonial-form of transaction. Scholars point to a number of facets of IEL programs, as being aligned with historical colonial patterns. In research by Heron (2007) that scrutinizes the motivations of IEL participants, the post-colonial expression of the Northern entitlement to help in the South is described as a 'helping imperative'. The idea that IEL program participants are meant to be 'helping' in the Global South should be problematized. A 'helping imperative' is predicated on the existence of need in Southern community, and the ability of the Northern volunteers to address that need. The construction of the 'other' as needy or undeveloped is aligned with a post-colonial frame of analysis. A helping imperative is related to a specific critique of IEL programs in the literature as it has been coined to identify issues around the mindsets of those from the North who take part.

In Heron's study these volunteers were found to be motivated by a constructed self-identity of being emancipated and entitled to liberate, educate, and 'develop' people

in the South. It would seem that if volunteers embodied this type of self-righteous attitude consciously or not, that members of a Southern host community could perceive this as paternalistic.

The helping imperative fits into a post-colonial theoretical framework that aids in contextualizing the contemporary motivations of program participants. There are several critiques related to volunteer motivations on IEL programs that draw on a post-colonial perspective in the scholarship. For example, it is suggested that participants can perpetuate some variants of the white saviour complex in these potentially colonizing experiences (Cole, 2012; Tiessen, 2014). For example, racial hierarchy can be recognized in IEL practice today (Benham Rennick, 2013; Heron, 2016; Pluim et al., 2012; Reynolds & Gasparini, 2016).

Perhaps it is not surprising that IEL volunteers exhibit a helping imperative, since the programs in which they participate often explicitly construct the experiences they promote in terms of 'helping' or 'serving' communities. Marketing materials for IEL programs frequently convey their programs as an opportunity to help and make a difference (Tiessen, 2018; Hartman et al., 2014). It is equally possible that IEL programs are not positioned to help a Southern community but are, as Heron (2016) suggests educational programs that use a service-learning component merely as something for the Northern participants to do, or a "way to have authentic experiences across differences" p. 82. This may support learning for the Northern participant, but does not necessarily imply a positive community development outcome.

West is Best?

The ethnocentric perception of self that often underlies the Northern helping imperative theme is supported by dominant myths of Western cultural superiority (Pease, 2010). As is made explicit in the discourse of developed/developing nation, or first/third world, the idea of the West as the ideal model for the rest of the world represents a proposition that the rest of the world adopt Western values and practices. As Pease so succinctly describes, "the greatest power that the West has is not its economic and technological supremacy, but its power to define what is progress and ultimately what it means to be human" (2010, p. 41). Post-colonial critique helps us understand how 'orientalist' (Said, 1978) constructions of the North and South permeate the moral economy of contemporary IEL initiatives.

There are other ways that an assumption of Western cultural superiority may contribute to negative community development outcomes in the communities that IEL programs visit (Grusky 2000, Oldfield 2008, Tiessen 2012, Larsen 2016). The emphasis so often associated with IEL programs on 'building something' may contribute to a 'charity' model of community development, which negates/downplays Southern agency, and may also support or create dependency relationships, i.e., longer-term patterns that lead to requiring these 'helping' relationships and a corresponding diminishment of autonomy and local self-reliance (Butin, 2007). Concurring with this assessment, O'Sullivan and Smaller (2016) assert that IEL programs that involve material or labour donation may be displacing the local paid labour force.

In addition, the potential of dependence on volunteers from the Global North is exacerbated when there is a shift away from state responsibilities regarding the wellbeing and prosperity of citizens, to the privatization and 'NGOization' of development in the

Global South. This is a trend that has been documented through the 1980s and 1990s (Pluim and Jorgenson, 2012). Prior to these decades, when the state was deemed solely responsible for a country's development and focused on large-scale development projects such as dams and roads, unskilled volunteer opportunities were few. Increasingly, many communities in the Global South have adopted North-South volunteer programs as a main strategy for community development, spawning grass-roots organizations and private providers with this mandate. In turn, civil society (including HFHES in the case of the research presented here) has created parallel IEL programs, providing volunteer opportunities for relatively affluent individuals from the Global North (Conran, 2011; Sin, et al. 2015). This trend raises numerous ethical questions and challenges, not least of which is, how useful are Northern volunteers in these kinds of community development roles? What evidence do we have to support the continued participation of wealthy Northern volunteers in the development efforts of the Global South, or evidence that suggests this kind of participation needs to be reworked? There is concrete concern that creating dependency on Northern IEL programs can lead to negative outcomes for the host community, as it can undermine processes that contribute to self-sufficiency and suggests a pending hardship when IEL program supports shift or are cancelled.

Another important critical point is that Northern participants are engaging in experiences that are constructed in ways that can reinforce their potential perceptions as holders of superior culture or knowledge by virtue of their global subject position within the North. Evidence of this is found in participant's lack of recognition of, or lack of concern for addressing/recognizing the broader structural inequality that often underlies the on-the-ground problems and projects upon which their specific actions and efforts are

focused. Instead of examining structural factors of inequality and how inequality is supported through ongoing colonial processes, there is an emphasis on the luck of being born in the North and an inflated notion of a capacity to help (Tiessen, 2012). While some volunteers may feel discomfort witnessing material inequalities, they view poverty as something to defend themselves against, rather than something to challenge (Schwarz, 2015).

This type of attitude is manifest in those IEL programs that focus on the 'problem' in the South such as corruption, HIV/AIDS, or environmental degradation, without considering the global context of colonial economic relationships, imposed market approaches to healthcare and education, as well pollution havens and other North-South transfers of environmental risk (Langdon & Agyeyomah, 2014). There are many references in the literature regarding the potential harm caused by program participants to host communities as a result of carrying views of cultural superiority based on that kind of ignorance of the larger picture. For example Oldfield (2008) points out that in IEL programs there can be a tension between the perceived academic expertise of students from the Global North, and the knowledge and purpose of the people in the host-communities, which can result in conflict. Crabtree (2008) describes an ethnocentric disposition of foreign volunteers that can lead to behaviours that are disruptive to, and dismissive of local practices.

Another example of potential harm in Southern host communities as a result of perceived cultural superiority can be found in global health electives that are an increasingly common element of Northern medical schools curriculum. Huish (2014) describes programs that often send medical students to under-resourced clinics in the

Global South where these students take on roles that undermine the capacity for training local health professionals, or worse, causing injury to patients through incompetent medical practices. The attribution of 'expertise' to Northern participants in such programs is a serious aspect of long-embedded colonizing perspectives – held by both Northern participants, and the Southern communities alike (Ngugi, 1986).

IEL – Potential Contributions

Given these various critiques of IEL from a post-colonial perspective, how can we account for the fact that existing research on host community feedback on programming impacts suggest a largely positive assessment? As introduced earlier, O'Sullivan and Smaller (2016) concluded, "The community-based respondents seemed overwhelmingly positive in their assessments of the value of ISL projects and their impacts on their communities" (p.62). They found that while the study participants were critical of some elements of the experience, they were generally in favour of the programs continuing, and could name a number of tangible benefits of the IEL programs for their communities. For example, the host community members found that they benefitted personally through the close relationships formed with the foreign volunteers. Others expressed appreciation for the material benefits to the community, including infrastructure like schools or community centres, and donated funds to purchase medical, school and sporting supplies for the community. Though we bear in mind, as noted previously, there is a tension between these as benefits and long-term concerns around dependency on such benefits.

In a recently published analysis of the impacts reported by 165 host organization staff from all around the Global South, Tiessen (2017) found that these research participants

also conveyed largely positive perspectives on local impacts associated with the foreign volunteers. They listed a number of concrete ways that they felt that 'help' was provided to the communities by the foreign volunteers. This included financial help to the hosting organization, through donations or fees associated with the volunteer placement, and by providing some human resources support, helping when the local organization is short-staffed and in need of volunteer support. A result of this study that is particularly interesting is the response that hosting foreign volunteers was helpful to the local staff in terms of developing increased intercultural understanding, and awareness of cultural practices in other countries. This suggests a potentially powerful learning outcome for the host community as a result of hosting foreign volunteers.

As has been noted in the preceding section, the overall impact of IEL programs is not well understood. Recent studies have presented valuable insights, however the significant differences in characteristics among the IEL programs implicated in those studies highlights the gap in this field of research. Evidence substantiating or disproving the concerns stemming from post-colonial continuities identified by scholars is very thin. The present research project aims to make a small contribution to addressing these gaps. In particular, it will contribute to understanding host community impacts, relative to very short IEL programs (1 or 2 weeks long), in the context of a major national NGO (HFHES) working on providing affordable housing in El Salvador. Broadly speaking the aim is to add to our understanding of the interactions between Northern volunteers and Southern host communities as a result of IEL programs. Further, depending on the nature of the impacts identified, this analysis will identify learning and potential adjustments to inform ongoing and future IEL programming.

In summary, there are broad and specific critiques of IEL programs that focus on positive outcomes for the Northern participants, but which perpetuate colonial patterns of exploitation. These programs may be causing harm, or at least not serving Southern communities, coupled with participants who come unaware of how they contribute to these colonial patterns, or with notions of cultural superiority. All of this leads to a desire for this case study research to see what community members in the Global South perceive about these engagements, to discern if indeed there is harm.

Methodology

This research project employs a qualitative non-positivistic approach to the exploration of new knowledge related to the research question. The research methodology is based on an assumption that there is no single truth related to the research question, but instead that there will be many truths shared by the research participants[2]. This will be evident in the potentially different ways that one particular research participant perceives the experience compared with that of another. Acknowledging this reality, this research will work toward a set of contextualized though potentially generalizable conclusions based on the range of perspectives found.

The great diversity of locations, formats, durations, program goals and program participant motivations associated with IEL programs (Tiessen, 2012) lead to the reasonable conclusion that the reality of impact on host community members in these

[2] Throughout this paper I will use the term 'program participant' to refer to people, usually from the Global North, that join IEL programs as volunteers and learners. I use the term 'research participant' to refer to the host community members that agreed to participate in this study.

various programs will be as different as the programs themselves. Even within the communities chosen for this particular study, the research participants will have had very different experiences based on a variety of factors, such as the program duration, the motivations or attitudes of the foreign volunteers and the nature of the IEL program with which they are associated.

This MRP focuses on the experiences of individual Salvadoran community members to better understand the impacts of IEL programs on these host communities. In addition to adding to the body of narrative research around host community impacts, this study will make a contribution in the form of a series of concrete recommendations that may be useful for the planning and implementation of future IEL programs. These will be specifically relevant for HFHES, further HFH volunteer hosting programs, and perhaps for other organizations open to incorporating these recommendations into their own IEL programs. A common critique of most social science research is that little or no benefit from the project comes to the research participants. As a result of this MRP, and in close collaboration with Salvadoran colleagues, a resource document will be produced that will be shared with volunteer teams to equip them to be more aware of the motivations and expectations of the community members they will interact with. I am optimistic that this resource will be shared with other national Habitat volunteer hosting programs, such that they may adapt the document and benefit from these insights. While many hosting programs do collect data on the experiences of the community members that host volunteers, it is my hope that this resource will also stimulate more interest in formal feedback mechanisms from host community members on their experiences with foreign volunteers.

Research Participants

The logical way to respond to the research question is to speak directly to host community members in the Global South, so this research focuses on collecting the views and learning about the experiences of host community members in a number of Salvadoran communities who are partnered with HFHES through their home-building mandate. For the purposes of this study, the host community is being defined as the adult members of the families that are partnered with HFHES. I acknowledge that these families are a small fragment of a larger social context within which the IEL program exists, however based on available resources this research did not have the means to explore a more extensive set of community members for data collection purposes.

Previous researchers in this area have noted that host community research has focused more on NGO partner staff or community leaders than on the community members who most closely experience the foreign volunteers (Heron, 2016). This could be for logistical or ethical reasons, or a belief that the local partner staff are themselves perceiving or actively collecting this feedback from the host community members. In contrast, this research is focused primarily on the host community members themselves, in this case HFHES partner families, who had close/immediate contact with the foreign volunteers. I also interviewed, when possible, the local HFHES representatives, particularly if they have had contact with many teams of foreign volunteers.

The inclusion criteria for this study are Salvadoran families that have received assistance from foreign volunteers in the construction of their houses, and interacted directly and recently with the volunteers from the Global North. These families applied for and received support from HFHES in the form of a newly constructed housing unit.

This support includes (but is not limited to) provision of architectural plans, site survey, ordering and supply of building materials, and trained professional labour and masons to complete the construction. One of the most important services offered by HFHES to partner families is an interest-free loan, to be repaid on terms that are realistic for the family, and flexible to account for life events (such as loss of employment). Most of the families interviewed had interacted with the foreign volunteers within the previous year, while some hosted foreign volunteers two years prior to the interview (more on this in the methods section).

Colleagues at HFHES identified the specific and appropriate communities for the interviews based on these inclusion criteria, as well as logistical considerations regarding scheduling and geographies. Due to the remote locations of many of the communities with which HFHES works, and the timeframe available to conduct the interviews, specific areas were chosen. This meant that data was collected in areas where there are clusters of Habitat-built houses, enabling the research team to walk from house to house interviewing the family members found at home who consented to share their views and experiences. We designed this strategy to maximize the number of families that we were able to interview, within our available limits of time and resources. Families were given advance notice of the research and the purpose of the study, but we were unable to schedule the actual interviews in advance due to the many variables involved. The result is that the community members interviewed were those who happened to be at home on the day and time that the research team arrived at their house

It is important to acknowledge that interviewing host community members in this context presents some unique challenges that could have affected the data (O'Sullivan &

Smaller, 2016). For example, the families may not have been inclined to speak openly about a negative experience with the IEL program, respecting the social norm of not speaking badly of guests. Likewise, a fear of impacting a program that could or has brought some material benefit to the community may have suppressed critical comments by host community members. Additionally, community members may have been reluctant to speak critically of their experience to a researcher from the Global North. As noted by Larsen (2016) in their study on host community impacts, it is ideal for the interviews to be conducted by a trained researcher who is from the local culture, as this reduces the impact on the data of having a foreigner involved in the conversation, and what that might mean regarding levels of trust and comfort. However, as in the Larsen study, I did not have sufficient time or resources to implement this strategy and instead I, along with the key Salvadoran research collaborator, posed questions and facilitated discussion. The research team emphasized the intent of the research and the confidentiality of the comments in hopes that the community members felt comfortable to express themselves openly. Also, I hoped that by conducting the interviews together with a Salvadoran researcher, the community members felt more open to being critical of their foreign guests.

Data Collection

The interviews occurred during two time periods, February of 2016 and February of 2017. HFHES was selected as the IEL partner organization as Wilfrid Laurier University (the location of my graduate program) has been sending undergraduate students to El Salvador to participate in these programs for several years. HFHES indicated a desire to work with the research team to assist with the data collection, and an

openness to incorporating the outcomes of the study into the IEL programs currently being delivered.

The process to collect this information included interviews based on a semi-structured set of both direct and open-ended questions, along with participant observation by the researcher in the form of field notes. The method of qualitative data collection centred on interviews with host community and/or organization members is not unique among researchers interested in the impacts of IEL programs (O'Sullivan & Smaller, 2016; Conran, 2011; Tiessen, 2012). The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of participants, and field notes were made during and after each round of interviews. Significant excerpts of the interviews were translated and transcribed by the researcher, in order to be shared in the results section of this paper.

The informed consent form is attached as Appendix A. Colleagues at HFHES reviewed the interview questions to ensure appropriate phrasing and translation to Spanish. The complete interview question guide is attached as Appendix B. The questions followed a structure intended to give the interviewees multiple opportunities to reflect on both negative and positive aspects of the experience with the program participants.

Ethics

This work endeavours to cross the North-South scholarly divide by working in partnership with community members, local staff and scholars in Southern communities. Larsen et al (2016) raise important critiques regarding the ethics of conducting host community research in the Global South, as well as the epistemological assumptions that inform this work. The very label of 'host community' represents the construction of a

subject or entity to be scrutinized as an object of study. I am aware that this 'host community' is an artificial construction, grouping individuals together in a way that makes sense for this research, but which may not apply equally in the minds of the research participants.

To ensure that high standards of research ethics were employed during the study, the research plan was approved by Wilfrid Laurier University's Research Ethics Board. Participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form that carefully explains the risks to the participants using terminology that is accessible to people with low literacy levels. When necessary, the consent form was read aloud by the researchers, or verbally explained, and many times consent was also provided verbally. Pseudonyms are used in the discussion of results to protect the identities of the research participants.

Analytical Approach

The interview data was analyzed in dialogue with Salvadoran research colleagues and ongoing dialogue with these colleagues was an important step in the interpretive process of the data collected. The results of the interviews were compared with the anecdotal experience of front line HFHES staff members that regularly work with volunteer teams. The thematic analysis then focused on identifying response themes that arose in conjunction with the research question. The analytical approach is informed by constructivist grounded theory, as key ideas in the thematic analysis will be identified by the researcher through careful and iterative review of the interview transcripts (Charmaz, 2006).

The analytical process identified critical comments describing the experience with the program participants and any suggestions of changes to the structure of this IEL

program. If present, critical comments regarding the experience could be due to a number of factors, and in my analysis I worked to link any significant comments or themes on volunteer and family interactions and impacts with a post-colonial construct of IEL practice. I also looked for such things as: subtle indications that harm may have occurred through cultural insensitivity, descriptions of misunderstandings, lack of interest or engagement by the volunteers, the imposition of foreign values, etc.

As well, during the analysis I was open to any unanticipated outcomes that might challenge a post-colonial framing of IEL programs. I have noted that a post-colonial analysis is common in Northern literature on this topic, but may not be relevant to the perspectives shared by host community members in this study. It is possible that host community members have, as Heron (2015) found in recent host community research, "a stance that defies the binaries of North-South, developed-developing, helper-helped, and as such lies outside of Northern notions of resistance to post-colonialism or neo-colonialism." (p.91).

Where themes emerge that suggest a potential pattern of harm through program participant engagement, the analysis feeds into recommendations for future IEL participants, preparation and programs. These recommendations were first discussed with my Salvadoran research colleagues, and then translated into Spanish to be shared with the Salvadoran affiliates that work to organize volunteer build experiences for teams of foreigners.

Challenges and Adaptations in the Research Process

The interviews were conducted during two separate periods in 2016 and 2017. The 2016 interviews were centered in El Barrial, a very small, remote community in the

department of Morazán, where HFHES has been involved in building over 100 houses since 2014 (Appendix C). The 2017 interviews were conducted in Suchitoto, Getsemaní, and San Miguel, (See Figure 1: Research Locations in El Salvador). In total, 18 families, 4 HFHES staff members, and 1 community leader were interviewed. The interviews lasted from 15 to 45 minutes each.

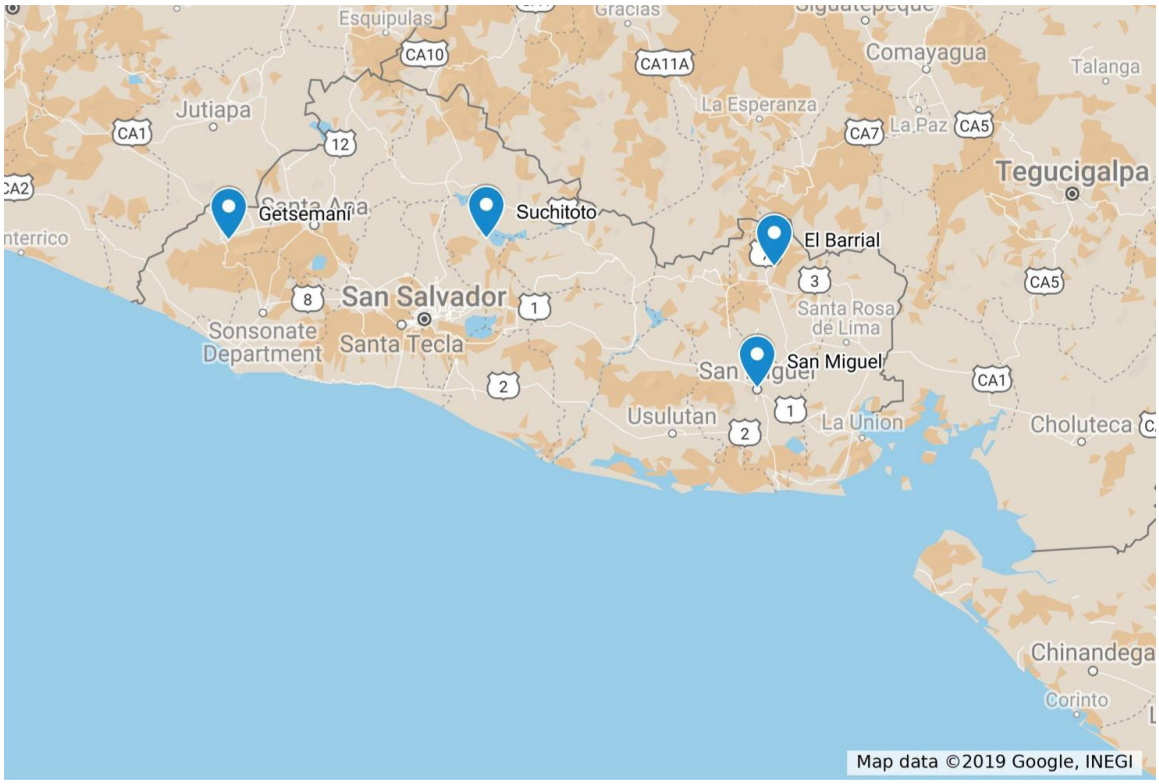

Figure 1: Research locations in El Salvador

The goal during the 2016 round of interviews was to speak with 10 families, a number that seemed reasonable considering the time and resources that were available for this project. I worked closely with my contacts at HFHES to identify possible locations for these interviews. These contacts were my gatekeepers to identify families, navigate the host communities to locate the families, and provide an introduction when we arrived. I also relied on the HFHES contacts to plan the logistics of the community visits and interviews. The inclusion criteria that we discussed were that the families had recently

experienced foreign volunteer support in the construction of their Habitat house. My research collaborator, HFHES staff member and Salvadoran, Emilio Velis, agreed to participate as a co-researcher and assist with the participant interviews.

Figure 2: Researchers in the village of Getsemaní, Auchapan Department, El Salvador

In 2016 Emilio and I conducted a total of 11 interviews, including 9 host community members, 1 local HFHES staff member, and the head of the local community council. Overall these interviews provided some useful data, though I also encountered some unanticipated challenges. Firstly, I employed a formal written informed consent form constructed following my university's ethics review office, and this proved to be a barrier for the research participants. Despite being designed with minimal text, and large subtitles for readability, the literacy level in the community was quite low. We quickly adapted the process to reading the form aloud, and discussing the points within, in order to ensure the research subjects understood the implications of the research.

The second challenge arose from the specific community that was chosen in the first year, El Barrial. Due to a number of factors, including availability of local HFHES

staff to support the visit, and consideration of the proximity of at least 10 partner families, this community was selected only a few days prior to my arrival. Upon arrival, in conversation with local HFHES staff members I learned that this small community was a central focus of violence and unrest during the Salvadoran civil war (1980-1992). As a result, most of the population fled the area during that time, only returning in the late-1990s. When community members did return, they found their homes and farms had been destroyed. These conditions exacerbated the pre-existing poverty, hampered community development efforts, and due to the extremely poor housing conditions HFHES became involved with reconstruction in 2014, building dozens of homes. The specific challenge that I had not anticipated was a strong distrust of outsiders, which I feel resulted in a resistance to signing an official document (the informed consent) and what I perceived as a lack of openness and responsiveness to the interview questions.

The final challenge was that the interview subjects in 2016 had all interacted with foreign volunteers approximately 2 years prior to the interview, and their recollection of the details of the experience was understandably low given the long time interval that had elapsed. Hence, based on experience from the 2016 interviews, the 2017 round of interviews emphasized proximity in time to the build experience in selecting subjects to interview.

The 2017 interview included participants who had recent (within the past 12 months) experience with foreign volunteers, and a focus group with three families on the arrival day, and again with the same three families on the departure day of the foreign volunteers. The focus group was organized with the goal of collecting the reflections of research participants who had just completed the experience, and due to the pre-

experience meeting had a level of familiarity with the researchers and were aware of the goals of the project. The first focus group meeting was designed to build rapport and an understanding of the goals of the research project. The second meeting, on the last day of the volunteer build project, was an opportunity for families to reflect on the experience with the foreign volunteers, and the experience with HFHES in general.

Results

In the following section I summarize the results of the interviews and focus groups, and discuss the three significant themes that were identified through the data analysis. Names of research participants have been changed to respect their anonymity.

1. Positive description of the experience

Research participants generally described a positive impression of the time spent with the foreign volunteers, speaking often in unambiguously affirmative terms about the experience. There were no comments that explicitly indicated that the types of community harm suggested in some critical literature has occurred through this specific form of IEL program. Indeed, the tone of the interviews was very positive, despite our efforts to probe potential negative outcomes. The positive comments extended to many facets of the experience. In this example regarding the team doing work to help build their home, when asked how volunteer training or selection could be improved, Hernando commented:

> They did an excellent, great work, the teams that came. More than sufficient. Personally I can't ask that they improve anything.

This type of response is typical of how research participants characterized the level of preparedness of the volunteers, even though the volunteers did not come with any

specific expertise, other than a willingness to do the work required by the local masons. Valeria's response to another important facet of the experience, the question of how the volunteers behaved during the build week was,

> Good, I'm happy. Very friendly, they spent a lot of time with my daughter. They behaved well. They brought clothing for her, and we had cake for her birthday. It was excellent for me, they behaved very well. They were very well-mannered.

This response shows that Valeria valued the experience, and also appreciated the interest that the volunteers showed in her child. Perhaps more significantly, she is indicating that she felt respected during the experience, unlike the scenario suggested by Crabtree (2008) that was disruptive or dismissive of local practices.

It is common during HFHES IEL programs for children of the host family to spend time with, and form bonds with the volunteers. Many research participants described positive interactions between the foreign volunteers and their children. Kathya expressed strong appreciation for the support of the volunteers, and also describes the relationship with her family that was formed during the short experience:

> For me it was a really great experience, with the two teams that came to my house. I really loved them, and I feel appreciative of what they did. In my community there's a lot of need for this type of help. And I feel very, like it was a great experience, more than I had hoped. They were young, very young, like my children, and in some ways quite fragile, but they worked so hard. They played with my son. And my family and me really appreciated it.

There are many, many examples from the interview data of positive comments with respect to the work ethic and moral character of the foreign volunteers. In fact, the topic of how hard the volunteers worked, despite the fact that they were not being paid for their labour, came up repeatedly. For example Ana shared,

> I am very appreciative of what they did. In particular that they volunteered to do this. They are some very hard working kids. Every time I looked, they were working hard. I hope that they will come back.

Ana's expression of the desire to see the volunteers again was common among the families, yet this also raises a problem with this type of volunteer program. It is unlikely that the volunteers will return, and even if they do participate with HFHES again they would quite likely not return to the same location. It is clear that many of the research participants forged relationships with the volunteers, but it is important they do not have an unrealistic hope that the relationship extend beyond the volunteer encounter.

The research participants frequently raised the importance of the positive relationships formed with the volunteers as an important outcome of the experience. The development of strong relationships is evident in the way that Edwin describes the conclusion of the experience with some remorse:

> When they enter into the community, for us is a joy. The sadness is when they have to leave the community. Right? That, for us, is… it isn't very easy to be living together for 8 days, and then another brigade comes and they're not the same. For us we have a connection with people that we didn't know, and they show a trust in the community. They give us this trust, so that we also show this trust.

Edwin is describing an impact of this IEL program, which is the difficulty for some, associated with concluding the experience. Other research participants echoed the sentiment that for them, they came to feel very close with the visitors, and quite sad upon their departure. Research team member Emilio Velis helped to contextualize this, by commenting that for many Salvadoran families,

> Once you have eaten a meal at my house, you are like family. You are always welcome and this means that a strong bond has been formed. This is typical for Salvadoran families.

This depth of relationship was also frequently expressed in terms of an interest in staying connected with the volunteers. It is remarkable the sense of the importance of relationship that was described by the community members after just a one-week encounter, and despite the language barrier. Some research participants expressed a familial-type relationship was formed during the experience such as when Sofia shared,

> For me, to have them at our house, I was very happy the days that they were here. I shared with them, and they were very kind, and I would like to see them again. I told them that I loved them a lot. One of them told me that she doesn't have a grandmother, and that I was like her grandmother.

The next two themes identified in the data came, as will be seen, through a nuanced interpretation of responses that suggest ways the research participants could be more fully engaged in the experience.

2. Host community members motivated for intercultural learning

As is evident from some of the voices already shared, a significant theme that arose in the interviews with community members is the importance they assigned to activities with the volunteers that were focused on experiences other than house construction. Many of the community members recounted highlights of the experience of sharing stories, cooking together, and learning about each other's homes, families and lives. This is surprising as so much of the emphasis in marketing this particular IEL program is on the goal of providing or improving the housing situation for families, and contributing to the mission of Habitat for Humanity. It is generally not marketed as an opportunity for intercultural exchange. While it is true that the research participants indicated appreciation for the labour contributions of the program participants in the

completion of the housing projects, there were many more comments citing the highlight of the experience for the families as an opportunity for intercultural exposure and learning. For example Sofia explained,

> We taught them how to milk cows. They learned how to make tortillas, they tried our typical food, and we gave them some small local snacks, so that they could get to know a bit, what we like to eat. So they ate enchiladas, and they asked a lot of questions. They wanted to see an iguana, a Garrobo! Some had never seen a cow before! They were very curious.

This interest in learning about the cultural 'Other' was reciprocal. The research participants were keenly aware of the cultural difference that exists between themselves and the program participants, and the possibility to learn about the foreign volunteers. This awareness of cultural difference was perhaps heightened because of the interactions during the week, and the difference that became apparent during their interactions. Ana expressed,

> We also hoped for a cultural exchange. There are a lot of things that are similar, and we learned a lot too. People change from country to country but I believe that goodwill is carried to wherever you go. But yes it was very interesting to see how they got excited to see something that for us is completely normal. They're mostly city folks, right? I imagine that they don't really know the countryside.

Ana's comment clearly demonstrates a desire for learning from and about the foreign volunteers. Even though it is not expressed as a goal of this IEL program, it is clear that some form of intercultural learning is occurring for many participants. I believe that the possibility of intercultural learning for the host community members is just as great, if not greater, as that for the foreign volunteers. In general the research participants are working class and may not have had the chance to travel to other countries, or experience this level of cultural difference. This does not discount the opportunity for the

foreign volunteers to learn about realities of community development and house construction in the Salvadoran context. However the HFHES partner families are conscious that their houses will be built, even without foreign volunteer labour support. Indeed most of the housing improvements completed by HFHES in El Salvador are done so without foreign volunteer labour. The extra labour supplied by the Northern volunteers is appreciated, though many families express an interest in getting to know the volunteers, learning about culture, and developing relationships. Mauricio, an older man, spoke emphatically about the importance of the intercultural learning experience,

> For us it was a really nice experience. It was special as it's something that doesn't happen very often, and for us it was a blessing from god. We learned, or as a person what I came to understand was that it is beautiful to meet new people. There is a challenge with communication, as English is very different from Spanish. This is a wall, a barrier to communication but on the other hand we were grateful for the translators, but also to all of you who help us understand that where there is a will, that longing and love. We also see that these things are not an obstacle because in spite of all that, they are overcome, and we have been sharing with the group of Canadians, living a pleasant moment, maybe once in a life, because I am already my age and I have never experienced such an experience and I like it, I enjoy it, I am pleased to have had the experience of sharing and being there living moments of work with the people from there, and us here, and I feel grateful.

Indeed the value of the intercultural experience for Mauricio is clear, as is the uniqueness of the opportunity to interact with a group of foreigners. For Maurico the opportunity to interact with a group of foreigners in this way was very valuable and he expressed that he spent as much time with the program participants during the build week as possible.

A desire for more opportunities for intercultural exchange within the program included the possibility of extending the experience to the children of families and

exploring some of the natural beauty of the area. Jorge, a Catholic priest and community organizer expressed,

> They came here to work, but for us it would have been nice to have taken a day to go with our kids to, perhaps, the river or make pupusas. A 'dia recreativa' for the volunteers and for the families.

In this way Jorge is envisioning the possibility to create more opportunities for reciprocal intercultural learning, and also for the program participants to see more of the host community. It speaks to human dignity and pride that the host community members would also want a foreign visitor to experience some of the highlights of the local community, and not only the house construction site. In general the houses are being built in poor, rural areas, and it is natural that the community members would like the visitors to experience the tourist sites as well.

As Sofia describes her experience with the foreign volunteers, she expresses her appreciation for learning about the volunteer's homes:

> When one tries to speak with them, when they speak of their homes, I feel that these were very special moments. Because I felt, for example when we went to see the cows, they started to remember their homes, they started to tell me that they want to do this, understand that. These are youth who want to do everything.

This comment reinforces the notion that the host community members valued the opportunity to learn about the homes of their guests. Considering Mauricio's comment regarding the rarity of this type of experience in the context of their community, it makes sense that Sofia also valued this unique opportunity. Valeria's sentiment nicely exemplifies the desire for, and opportunity for intercultural learning during the experience:

> It's very gratifying to teach them, and to show them a bit about our lifestyle. I think that the little bit that we're able to show them and the little that we can learn about them, this is very important. We could understand many things, that they're not that different than we are.

Valeria's idea that through an experience of intercultural difference, we may discover commonality is aligned with the goals of global citizenship. Accepting that exposure to the cultural 'other' may result in an understanding of difference and increased capacity to perceive commonality, which in turn begins to open up possibilities to build solidarity.

One of the interviews was with Maria, the head of a community council where Habitat is involved in building many homes. Maria is very supportive of the involvement of foreign volunteers in the new houses being built in her community. When asked about how she felt the weeklong experience had impacted the volunteers in terms of their learning, she offered this:

> Well, I think that perhaps in this, they haven't received much impact, much knowledge. Because, as I mentioned before, because they have not had the space to have this, to share the experience, right? Because here there are groups, youth organizations, women's organizations, the council, we're going to have an environmental committee, so they have not directly had this connection. And that's why - they haven't taken up the mentality of the community. Because they come more focused on the work of the construction. The time with the community is very limited.

Maria's perception is that the volunteers and the schedule created for them, tend to prioritize the time spent on house construction activities over other possible experiences in the community. Implicit in this comment is the reality that the community was likely not sufficiently involved in planning the experience, or defining the objectives of the IEL program. Her analysis implies that this limited the potential for learning for the program participants. Meanwhile it is possible that the community would prefer more of

the time spent together to be on non-construction activities. This perspective shows a potential conflict between the priorities of the foreign volunteers and the community members. For example Ana suggested,

> I would love to spend another day with them, making pupusas.

And Heidi expressed a similar desire for non-construction related activities by proposing,

> We would love to take them to Cuco, so that they could see the beach. They were really excited about the idea. But in reality there is no resource to be able to take them.

The lack of inclusion of the research participants in the planning of these programs is evidenced in these comments from community members and their unheeded suggestions for the weekly itinerary. This reality suggests a power imbalance between the Northern participants and the Southern community members, regarding the planning of the experience.[3] It also suggests that there might be potential for more or different learning opportunities for all those involved. Indeed a common comment from research participants, when asked about how these types of programs could be improved was to focus on the potential learning of the program participants, and the potential for an exchange of culture. As Mauricio proposes,

> 2 weeks together would be better, but I feel like it would be better to reduce the work, because in reality going from 8 in the morning, to 4 in the afternoon, I feel that we need more opportunity to go out, get to know the community, interact with people, I think that they would learn a lot more. It could be something simple like go see an art centre, doesn't need to be complicated. Something that they can

[3] Also at play here is the requirement from the government for HFHES, as part of its charitable status, to focus mainly on volunteer work, which limits time available for programming that might support intercultural exchange.

> do in a day here, but it would be very difficult to see it where they come from. Go to a pupuseria and make pupusas, or to a bakery and make bread, things we do daily here that are very different from the life there. This would be a way to learn a bit more, and not only through heavy labour. It's really good the idea of making the foundation of the home, help with the construction of the home in reality is the best, but the cultural exchange is also essential for them.

The coordination structure of this particular IEL program does not include the families in the planning of the itinerary for the week. There is a standard itinerary that has been developed, one designed to appeal to Northern volunteers, and their sense of a 'helping imperative'. This also points to a structural difference in the participants expectations of their time spent together, perhaps this is rooted in the expression of the Northern helping imperative, overriding the Southern desire for relationship building and intercultural learning. It would seem that host community members are not satisfied with this, and that there may be missed opportunities for learning and intercultural exchange in this program planning as it exists.

Discussion

In this study I have sought to understand the perspectives of the Southern host communities regarding their experience of IEL programs originating in the Global North. As noted in the results section, host community members were eager to share their experiences with the research team, and strongly expressed their support for this type of IEL program. For many, this was a completely unique experience, and one that clearly had a profound impact on them. At the same time they also expressed concerns, and recommendations to improve future IEL programs.

1. Positive description of the experience

It is clear that the experiences of the host communities visited during this research project were predominantly positive. The data collected in interviews and focus groups through the course of this research does not support or align with the types of critiques that are raised both in contemporary scholarship and in the critical public discourse related to IEL programs. Even though I acknowledge the short-term character of this IEL experience, it is still described by the host-community members as effectively creating spaces where diverse people can work collaboratively toward common goals, and have a positive impact on the host community in the process.

This result was surprising to me, as I was expecting to hear more negative comments and reactions from the research participants. This is because the particular IEL program involved in this study raises a number of 'red flags' associated with some of the concerns noted in the critical literature on IEL programs. For example, it is marketed in a way that supports a 'helping imperative' motivation on the part of the foreign volunteers. The key message conveyed to program participants is that they will work to "eliminate poverty housing one house at a time" ("About Global Village," 2019). Yet the research participants did not express offense at this motivation, in the way Heron (2007) Tiessen (2012) and others have suggested might be occurring.

The consistent and overwhelming positive description of the experience with program participants is an unexpected result, albeit an encouraging one. What is even more unexpected was the resounding lack of critique of the IEL program of which the research participants were a part. A key research goal at the outset of this project was to find evidence of the types of harm that have been experienced and described in previous

IEL literature. As researchers we probed this area, in subtle and direct ways, and yet we were surprised time and again with largely positive descriptions of the experience.

In this particular program the volunteers are not positioned as possessing superior knowledge, or as experts. Instead, the volunteer roles are structured as unskilled labourers and it is made clear that they are under the supervision and instruction of trained, paid Salvadoran masons. This is a purposeful effort by HFHES to structure the work environment in order to avoid the formation of attitudes of cultural superiority. The potential for perception of ethnocentric dispositions on the part of the volunteers, as described by Crabtree (2008), was not expressed in the conversations with the host community members. There is no evidence in this case that host community members experienced harm or offence as a result of an attitude of cultural superiority on behalf of Northern volunteers, a similar result to previous research on IEL programs (Conran, 2011; Heron, 2016; O'Sullivan & Smaller, 2016).

It is clear that the host community members appreciated the labour contribution made by the volunteers. Both the partner families and community leaders interviewed in this research spoke positively about the impact of the volunteer teams on the construction projects. Even though this work could have been accomplished without the support of the volunteers, the volunteer team (often consisting of 10 or more people) did so more quickly and of course at less expense than paid labourers would have.

Furthermore, dependency relations, (O'Sullivan & Smaller, 2016) do not appear to be created or reinforced through this particular IEL program. Due to the presence of a strong national partner, HFHES, the possibility of contributing to dependence relations is reduced. The labour and financial contributions of the Northern volunteers are not

insignificant, but the reality is that the work of providing housing support to partner families would largely continue in El Salvador, even without support through an IEL program such as this one.

I feel that it is necessary at this point to reiterate that this result is based on one particular IEL program being facilitated by a longstanding and reputable non-profit organization in El Salvador (HFHES) in a way that is also modeled by Habitat for Humanity national affiliates in many other countries. The literature certainly documents concrete examples of truly negative outcomes related to IEL programs, though it would appear that this particular example is not in that category.

2. Power imbalance in planning and defining outcomes

The planning of this particular IEL program is done in a way to maximize the experience for the Northern volunteers. The standard weeklong itinerary is generally centered on the experience of the volunteers, and the team leaders are consulted in the planning phase to ensure that the itinerary matches their goals and ambitions. This research has found that host community members are not involved in the planning process, which is evident from the comments made about how the experience during the week might be improved[4]. Prioritizing the interests of the Northern volunteers has likely come from the fact that they are paying for the costs of the program, and also making a significant financial donation to HFHES, and thus are seen as a client or donor. Excluding the host community members from program planning may not be accounting for the time and effort invested by the host community members to ensure a positive

[4]The lack of inclusion of the host community members in this IEL program was also confirmed through the interviews with HFHES affiliate staff and program coordinators

experience for their Northern guests, and the reasonable expectation of inclusion in program planning.

Not a single research participant commented that they would like the volunteers to spend more time on construction activities, or accomplish more on the build site. On the contrary, the discussion about how the program could be improved centered almost exclusively on ways for the volunteers to learn more about the host community, and spend more time building a relationship with the partner family. This result indicates that there is much more that could be done to meet the host community member's hopes related to learning and relationship building. And this could be happening if the host community members are involved in defining the outcomes of the experience, or planning the actual itinerary.

The fact that host community member priorities are not on an equal footing in the planning process suggests that they are not equal participants in the experience of the week. This suggests a power dynamic that supports the assertion of a continued colonial dynamic (Benham Rennick, 2013; Heron, 2016; Pluim et al., 2012; Reynolds & Gasparini, 2016; Tiessen, 2014). This is problematic as this prevents the development of truly profound relationships between the program and research participants on both sides of the cultural exchange.

Ultimately it is not surprising that host community members would like to share their pride in their community with the Northern visitors. I contend that it is basic human nature to express one's dignity through showing areas of pride in one's community. This also demonstrates that the host community members would like the visitors to have an enjoyable learning experience, and see the cultural activities that they partake in as

valuable and of interest to the Northern visitors. This is also evidence of a sort of resistance to the idea that the helping imperative motivation of the Northern volunteers is paramount. The community members are suggesting that receiving help from the volunteers is not as important to them as perhaps the volunteers imagine it to be, leaving the possibility of moving the Northern participants to accept other forms of interaction as complementary or even primary.

3. Global citizenship… for Who?

Some of the research participants are clearly expressing their desire to share in reciprocal intercultural learning with their guests. Their comments demonstrate their motivation to not be passive recipients of help from Northern visitors, but rather active agents in an exchange of knowledge and culture. They are interested, for example, in the opportunities available for their children to learn language and to experience cultural difference. They are curious, and appreciate the new insights and awareness that they gain through interacting with the volunteers. In other words, as other scholars have found (O'Sullivan & Smaller, 2016; Tiessen 2017), they are interested in having experiences and developing some of the same competencies that Northern institutions promote as a path to global citizenship.

In many cases, particularly as these are poor families in rural areas, they may not have had such opportunities to interact with people from other cultures. Unlike the Northern volunteers, who likely sit next to students who have ties to many other places in the world in their classes, or have the resources to do further travelling, this may be a very unique experience for the host community members. Mauricio was quite emphatic

when he described how special the experience was for him and his community. There is a role here for the local HFHES staff member to better prepare the host community members for the encounter with the Northern volunteers, and also to support them to identify their own learning goals for the experience.

I believe that the host community members' motivation for learning or for having an intercultural experience is not being fully recognized or supported in this IEL program. This is not only a missed opportunity, but also the lack of support for learning outcomes for the host community members is evidence of the power imbalance in this North-South relationship. Seeing the host community members as equally engaged learners would challenge the centrality of a helping imperative that sees the 'helped' as the passive recipient of aid from the 'helper' (Heron, 2007). Crediting the host community members with the agency to see the potential learning opportunities and to be able to contribute to the outcomes of the program complicates the helper-helped dynamic that is present in the rhetoric of so many IEL programs.

Moreover, seeing the host community members as engaged learners would move organizations like HFHES to consider, in collaboration with the community members, what learning outcomes might be relevant for these people, and structure IEL programs to deliver this learning. Using this lens to plan future IEL programs could have profound impacts on the program structure, and could also have the effect of increasing the potential for solidarity to develop between the program actors, along with helping to deconstruct some enduring colonial patterns.

Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations for this particular IEL program that flow from the analysis of research in this project:

1. In order to support program and learning outcomes for this IEL program, host community members should be included in the planning process of the program goals and itinerary, together with the foreign volunteers. The research presented here clearly shows that the community members would appreciate this consideration, and the lack of host community inclusion in program planning only perpetuates North-South power inequities. The caveat with this recommendation is that it is also possible that a particular host community member may have no interest in being involved in program planning, and this choice should also be respected.
2. My second recommendation is that HFHES reframe the roles of the host community members to interpret these people as engaged learners, as well as beneficiaries of volunteer support. With this in mind, future programs may incorporate program elements that support host community member learning, and foreign volunteers can be challenged to participate in a more complex transaction with the host community that includes intercultural exchange.
3. I recommend that HFHES consider planning slightly longer IEL programs with a balance of work and community time that includes consideration of the previous two recommendations.
4. Finally, I recommend that HFHES carefully institute a formal feedback mechanism in collaboration with the host community members to evaluate

their experience with the foreign volunteers. It is important that host community members be viewed as equal stakeholders in the IEL program, and their feedback can be incorporated in future programs.

Conclusion

This Major Research Project contributes to the scholarship on host community impacts of IEL programs in the Global South. The findings of this research reveal that the experience of host community members can be positive, however there are ethical considerations that need to be taken up with serious intent by critical scholars and mainstream society alike. The status quo of a unidirectional flow of Northern volunteers pursuing an agenda based solely on Northern notions about the 'needs' of Southern communities is missing the possibility of incredible opportunities for learning and richness of experience. Moreover, a post-colonial perspective should alert us to the fact that these programs are continuing with little or no attempt to address underlying structural inequalities that have persisted since colonial times.

This study did not discover evidence of negative impacts occurring in Southern host communities as a result of IEL programs. What it did uncover is that by prioritizing the agenda of the already privileged Northern volunteer, the programs are not achieving the fullest possible learning and engagement for both volunteers and host community members. A simple and powerful shift of emphasis to more carefully balance community and volunteer needs could have a profound positive impact on learning outcomes and move IEL programs further toward a space where challenging global structural inequities could be a possibility.

The lack of literature on the experiences of host community members in the Global South is not reflective of the potential breadth of study needed, or the importance of the research to be done in this field. This MRP represents one study including four host communities, in El Salvador. The incredible diversity in IEL program variables (Crabtree, 2013) means that this research cannot be widely generalized. More work needs to be done to validate the findings presented here, and further study is necessary to explore impacts in host communities across the wide variety of IEL programs that exist.

There are several specific recommendations for further study that come from this research project, that would serve to increase our understanding of the experiences of Southern host communities in IEL programs, as well as further support positive outcomes in these programs. This research project looked at the community experience with an IEL program that is organized by a large and reputable non-profit organization. I predict that study on the host community impacts of IEL programs of for-profit, small, or poorly-resourced organizations is more likely to uncover harm in those communities, and thus result in recommendations to avoid and mitigate this harm. One limitation of this research is that it does not consider more deeply embedded cultural dimensions of post-colonial relations. For example the ways in which the research and program participants are working under a set of assumptions of what is 'normal' based on their positions in the Global South or North. Further, ethnographic research may help to explore this aspect of post-coloniality and the ways that community members experience this through IEL programs.

Also, it would be very useful to include observation of interactions between Northern volunteers and Southern community members. As has been noted, host community members may be hesitant to share critical comments for fear of offending their guests, or negatively impacting future projects in their community. An observational study would help to provide another perspective on host community impacts. However, researchers from the Global North need to weigh the appropriateness of using a postcolonial frame of analysis as this may not be compatible with a host community's experience. Also, research into long-term impacts in host communities would be useful to understand the impacts on a particular family over time, as well as the cumulative impacts of multiple IEL programs visiting the same community.

Further, a comparative study comparing an IEL program that has implemented best practices, which include a robust feedback mechanism for host community members, and the host experience in a non-progressive IEL program could be very insightful. For example a common recommendation from host community members in this study and others (Larson & MacDonald, 2016; Vorstermans 2016) is that volunteers stay longer in host communities. Comparative studies are needed to explore outcomes across such variables.

It is possible that other research methods will be necessary to conclude that the community is being impacted through the process of colonial continuity. Evidence of, for example, the imposition of foreign values may be uncovered through an analysis of the funding model, or the power structure of the international organization (Habitat for Humanity International).

Finally I recommend that research and development in this area create tools and implement practices that can support IEL programs to go beyond traditional goals of helping or learning to uncover how IEL can better challenge global structural inequalities.

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Appendix A – Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT
WILFRED LAURIER UNIVERSITY
Collecting Host Community Narratives in El Salvador
Mike Boylan, principal investigator

[English] to be read by prospective participant or read aloud by interpreter or researcher in Spanish
**Note: consent will be requested prior to interview questions, after interview has taken place, and again upon departure.
**Note: if a written informed consent process is not appropriate, this form will be read aloud. Study participant will be a hard copy of the researcher's contact information, as well as that of the Chair of the Research Ethics Board, Dr. Robert Basso.
I am a graduate student from a university in Canada called Wilfrid Laurier University. My colleagues are a professor from the same Canadian University and an employee from Habitat for Humanity El Salvador.
We are conducting a small study to learn about the views and perspectives of families in El Salvador are involved with the international volunteer support program in the construction of their house.
You do not have to be in the study.
If you say yes, you can stop answering our questions at any time.
Please take as much time as you need to make your choice.
Why sign this document?
By signing this document you are agreeing to answer our questions and allow me to include your views in my report on this research. Your real name will not be used in the report.
What happens if I say yes, I want to be in the study?
If you say yes, we will ask:
(Before the international volunteers visit)

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself please?
- What are the main economic activities sustaining this community?
- What are some of the challenges that this community faces now, or in the past?
- What is the governance structure in this community?
- How is it that Habitat for Humanity has come to be working with your community?
- How is it that international volunteers have come to be involved in house construction in the community?
- What are your thoughts on having international volunteers come to participate in the construction of your house?
- What has been your experience of foreign volunteers visiting your community previously?
- What are some of the challenges in the community regarding having adequate housing?

- Can you describe any hopes, or fears that you have regarding the team of volunteers?
- What would you like the international volunteers to understand about your community?

(After the experience with the volunteers)

- How has your experience with Habitat for Humanity impacted your life?
- In what ways has having a new home benefitted you?
- Have you experienced any challenges as a result of having a new home?
- How was your experience with the international volunteers?
- In your opinion, what motivated the volunteers you met to travel here and assist in the construction of your home?
- What do you think were the benefits of having international volunteers participate in the construction of your home?
- Were there any negative aspects of having international volunteers participate in the construction of your home?
- In what ways were you or your family impacted by the presence of international volunteers?
- How do you imagine that the international volunteers were affected by the experience of assisting in the construction of your home?
- Are there any changes to this program that you would suggest, to improve the experience for yourself or other families?
- Any other comments about your experience with the international volunteers?

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. You can skip any question you do not want to answer.

What happens if I say no?

If you say no:

• We will not ask you questions about your experience with Habitat for Humanity international volunteers.

Who will see my comments?

The only people allowed to see your answers to our questions will be the researchers present today. The information will be kept securely in my computer.

When we share your story and the stories of the other people speaking with us today in presentations at the universities or in a published paper, we will **not** include your name.

We will do our best to protect your privacy.

Will it cost me anything to be in the study?

No.

Will I be paid for my time?

No. Speaking with us is voluntary.

Do I have to sign this document?

No. You only sign this document if you want to your experience with Habitat for Humanity International Volunteers to be documented in this study.

What should I do if I want to be in the study?
You sign this document. We will give you a copy.
By signing the document you are saying:

- You agree to be interviewed.
- You are 18 years old, or older.
- You are authorizing us to use and share your comments, as part of this study
- We talked with you about the information in this document and answered all your questions.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mike Boylan at mboylan@wlu.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been contravened during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, rbasso@wlu.ca.

You know that:

- You can skip questions you do not want to answer.
- You can stop answering our questions at any time.

_____

Your full name (please print)

_____

Date

_____

If verbal consent is preferred for this participant, explain why:

_____

If another person signed this form on behalf of the participant please explain why:

_____

Name of legal representative or guardian

_____

I give permission for my quotations to be used in publications and presentations. I am aware that my name will not appear in the quotation. ☐ YES ☐ NO

[*Spanish*] to be read by prospective participant or read aloud by interpreter or researcher in Spanish

Recopilación de las experiencias de comunidades anfitrionas en El Salvador
Formulario de consentimiento y autorización para usar y compartir su experiencia migratoria

Soy un estudiante de posgrado en una universidad en Canadá llamado Wilfrid Laurier University. Mis colegas son un profesor de la misma universidad y un empleado de Habitat Para La Humanidad El Salvador.

Estamos realizando un pequeño estudio para conocer las opiniones y perspectivas de las familias en El Salvador que han experimentado el apoyo internacional de voluntarios en la construcción de su casa Hábitat.

Usted no tiene que participar en el estudio.

Si usted dice que sí, puede dejar de responder a nuestras preguntas en cualquier momento.

Por favor, tómese todo el tiempo que necesita para hacer su elección.

¿Por qué firmar este documento?

Al firmar este documento usted está de acuerdo para responder a nuestras preguntas y me permitirá incluir sus puntos de vista en mi informe sobre esta investigación. Su nombre real no será utilizado en el informe.

¿Qué pasa si digo que sí, yo quiero estar en el estudio?

Si dice que sí, vamos a preguntar:

- ¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia con Hábitat para la Humanidad impactado su vida?
- ¿Cómo ha beneficiado de tener una nueva casa?
- ¿Ha experimentado desafíos como resultado de tener un nuevo hogar?
- ¿Cómo fue su experiencia con los voluntarios internacionales?
- En su opinión, que fue lo que motivó a los voluntarios que viajaron aquí para ayudar en la construcción de su casa?
- ¿Qué cree que fueron los beneficios de contar con la participación de voluntarios internacionales en la construcción de su casa?
- ¿Hubo aspectos negativos de tener voluntarios internacionales participando en la construcción de su casa?

- ¿De qué manera estaba usted o su familia afectados por la presencia de voluntarios internacionales?
- ¿Cómo se imagina que los voluntarios internacionales fueron afectados por la experiencia de ayudar en la construcción de su casa?
- ¿Hay algún cambio a este programa que usted sugiere, para mejorar la experiencia para usted o para otras familias?
- ¿Cualquier otro comentario acerca de su experiencia con los voluntarios internacionales?

Estas preguntas no tienen respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Puede saltar cualquier pregunta si no quiere contestarla.

¿Cuánto tiempo tomará el estudio?

El estudio tomará 20-30 minutos de su tiempo.

¿Qué pasa si digo "no quiero participar en el estudio"?

Si usted dice que no:

• No vamos a hacerle preguntas acerca de su experiencia con Hábitat para la Humanidad o voluntarios internacionales.

¿Quién verá mis comentarios?

Las únicas personas autorizadas para ver sus respuestas a nuestras preguntas serán los investigadores que estan aquí hoy. La información se mantendrá en la computadora de Mike Boylan.

Cuando compartimos su historia y las historias de las otras personas que hablan con nosotros hoy en presentaciones en las universidades o en un artículo publicado, **no vamos a incluir su nombre.**

Haremos todo lo posible para proteger su privacidad.

¿Me costará algo participar en el estudio?

No.

¿Me pagarán por mi tiempo?

No. Su participación es voluntario.

¿Tengo que firmar este documento?

No. Sólo firme este documento si quieres compartir su experiencia con Hábitat para la Humanidad y voluntarios internacionales para ser documentado en este estudio.

¿Qué debo hacer si quiero participar en el estudio?

Tiene que firmar este documento. Le entregaremos una copia.

Al firmar este documento nos está diciendo que:

• Está de acuerdo con participar en el estudio.

• Tiene 18 años de edad, o más.

• Nos está autorizando a usar y compartir sus comentarios para este estudio.

• Le hemos explicado la información que contiene este documento y hemos contestado todas sus preguntas.
Si tiene preguntas en cualquier momento sobre el estudio o los procedimientos, puede comunicarse con el investigador, Mike Boylan - mboylan@wlu.ca. Este proyecto ha sido revisado y aprobado por la Junta de Ética de la Investigación Universitaria. Si usted siente que no ha sido tratado de acuerdo con las descripciones de esta forma, o sus derechos como participante en la investigación se han infringido en el transcurso de este proyecto, puede comunicarse con el Dr. Robert Basso, Presidente de la Junta Ética de la Investigación Universitaria, Wilfrid Laurier University, rbasso@wlu.ca.

Usted sabe que:

• No tiene que contestar preguntas que no quiera contestar.
• En cualquier momento, puede dejar de contestar nuestras preguntas

_____
Su primer nombre (en letra de molde)

_____
Fecha

_____
Si se utilizó un intérprete. Nombre del intérprete (en letra de molde)

_____
Firma del intérprete

_____
Si se prefiere el consentimiento verbal para este participante, explique por qué:
Si otra persona firma este formulario a nombre del participante, explique por qué:

_____
_____
Nombre del representante legal (en letra de molde)

_____ _____
Firma de la persona que provee el Fecha consentimiento en representación del sujeto
Relación o parentesco:

_____
_____
Doy permiso para que mis citas para ser utilizados en publicaciones y presentaciones.
Soy consciente de que mi nombre no aparecerá en la cita. ☐ SI ☐ NO

Appendix B - Interview Guide

(Prior to the experience with the volunteers)

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself please?
- What are the main economic activities sustaining this community?
- What are some of the challenges that this community faces now, or in the past?
- What is the governance structure in this community?
- How is it that Habitat for Humanity has come to be working with your community?
- How is it that international volunteers have come to be involved in house construction in the community?
- What are your thoughts on having international volunteers come to participate in the construction of your house?
- What has been your experience of foreign volunteers visiting your community previously?
- What are some of the challenges in the community regarding having adequate housing?
- Can you describe any hopes, or fears that you have regarding the team of volunteers?
- What would you like the international volunteers to understand about your community?

(After the experience with the volunteers)

- How has your experience with Habitat for Humanity impacted your life?
- In what ways has having a new home benefitted you?
- Have you experienced any challenges as a result of having a new home?
- How was your experience with the international volunteers?
- In your opinion, what motivated the volunteers you met to travel here and assist in the construction of your home?
- What do you think were the benefits of having international volunteers participate in the construction of your home?
- Were there any negative aspects of having international volunteers participate in the construction of your home?
- In what ways were you or your family impacted by the presence of international volunteers?
- How do you imagine that the international volunteers were affected by the experience of assisting in the construction of your home?
- Are there any changes to this program that you would suggest, to improve the experience for yourself or other families?
- Any other comments about your experience with the international volunteers?
- What was the biggest cultural difference you found with the volunteers?

- Do you have a favourite memory of the time with the volunteers?
- Was there a volunteer who you will remember in particular? Why?
- Were there any challenging or awkward moments?

Appendix C – Project Profile – El Barrial

PERFIL DE PROYECTO

SECCION I. RESUMEN

Nombre del Proyecto	Construyendo Comunidad con El Barrial
Área Geográfica	Comunidad El Barrial, Municipio de Meanguera, Departamento de Morazán
Duración del Proyecto	4 años
Población Meta	109 Familias
Socios/Aliados (Potenciales)	**Internacionales:** -HFH of Montgomery County, MD -HFH Susquehanna -HFH Maryland (y otros afiliados de Maryland) **Nacionales:** -Gobernación Departamental de Morazán -Alcaldía Municipal de Meanguera -Protección Civil de Meanguera
Monto del Proyecto (en USD)	$ 639,855.95
Persona de Contacto	Kendal Stewart, Coordinadora de Gestión de Fondos Internacionales kstewart@habitatelsalvador.org.sv

SECCIÓN II: JUSTIFICACIÓN DEL PROYECTO

A. Descripción del Contexto y Antecedentes

Contexto del Departamento de Morazán

Ubicado en la zona nororiental del país, el departamento de Morazán limita al norte con la República de Honduras, al sur y al oeste con el departamento de San Miguel, y al sur y al este con el departamento de La Unión. Su cabecera departamental es San Francisco Gotera. Cuenta con una población de 174,406 habitantes, de los cuales 26% viven en zonas urbanas y 74% en zonas rurales.[1]

Morazán es uno de los departamentos en El Salvador con mayor índice de pobreza, ya que 6 de sus 26 municipios son categorizados con pobreza extrema severa.[2] La economía departamental depende de la agricultura; más de 40% de la población activa económicamente se dedica a este sector.[3] Por otra parte depende en parte de ayuda económica del exterior, ya que más de 23% de hogares reciben remesas.[4] Morazán tiene un déficit habitacional cualitativo de 18,830 y cuantitativo de 763,[5] lo cual afecta aproximadamente 56% de la población en el departamento. Casi 34% de la población no tiene acceso a agua potable por cañería, y más de 40% tiene una vivienda con piso de tierra.[6]

En el tema de vulnerabilidad a desastres naturales, Morazán presenta una susceptibilidad a deslizamientos de un 47.77% que se debe a las intensas precipitaciones, falta de vegetación en las laderas, alteración de drenaje, erosión o en algunas ocasiones, sismos intensos y procesos volcánicos. La humedad del suelo provoca la movilización masiva de masas de roca o sedimentos.[7]

[1] Ministerio de Economía Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Censos Nacionales VI de Población y V de Vivienda 2007 Tomo IV Municipios: Volumen I Características Generales de la Población* (San Salvador, El Salvador 2009), 5.
[2] FLACSO El Salvador, *Mapa de Pobreza: Tomo I. Política Social y Focalización* (San Salvador, El Salvador: FISDL, 2005), 69.
[3] Ministerio de Economía Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Censos Nacionales VI de Población y V de Vivienda 2007 Tomo III Población: Características Económicas* (San Salvador, El Salvador 2009), 190.
[4] Ministerio de Economía Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Censos Nacionales VI de Población y V de Vivienda 2007 Tomo VI Hogar: Volumen II Características Complementarias* (San Salvador, El Salvador 2009), XXXIII.
[5] Viceministerio de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano, *Déficit Habitacional VI Censo de Población y V de Vivienda 2007*, bajado el 17 de septiembre 2012, http://www.vivienda.gob.sv/temas/otros%20documentos/Deficit_Vivienda_2008.pdf.
[6] Ministerio de Economía Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Censos Nacionales VI de Población y V de Vivienda 2007 Atlas Sociodemográfico* (San Salvador, El Salvador 20010), 172 y 226.
[7] Fundación Agencia de Desarrollo Económico Local de Morazán, El Salvador, *Hacia la gestión del riesgo en Morazán: Una base para la determinación de amenazas y vulnerabilidades.*